

**DETAILED ACTION**

1. This is in response to application 10/564,183 filed on January 11, 2006 in which claims 1-19 are presented for examination.

***Status of Claims***

2. Claims 1, 3-9 and 11-17 are allowed, and claims 2, 10 and 18-19 are canceled.

**EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT**

3. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Andrew T. Harry (Reg. No. 56,959) on June 2, 2009.

The application has been amended as follows:

Rewrite claim 9 as follow:

"Claim 9. A system management apparatus for associating at least a process object and at least a process executed for each process object with each node in a tree structure, and operating each node based on the tree structure so as to manage the process object and the process, comprising:

a processor in communication with a database configured to store each piece of information of a general node corresponding to the process object, a function node corresponding to the process, and a registered user for operating the general node or the function node;

the processor configured to performing a process for registering a user ID to be uniquely assigned to each registered user and storing the user ID in the database;

the processor configured to uniquely assigning a node number to each of the general node and the function node, and storing the node number in the database by associating the node number with the general node or the function node;

the processor configured to set the function node as a child node of the general node corresponding to the process object for which the process corresponding to the function node should be performed, and setting the general node as a parent node of the function node, and storing information of the set child node into the database by associating the information with the general node that is the parent node;

the processor configured to set registered user operation authority for each registered user for each of the general nodes, and storing the registered user operation authority into the database by associating the registered user operation authority with the general node;

the processor configured to, when execution of the process corresponding to the function node is requested by the registered user, causing the function node to execute the process only when the process is permitted by the registered user operation

authority, of the registered user requesting the process, set in the general node that is a parent node of the function node,

the processor configured to provide a registered user in a general node with registered user operation authority including management authority for performing user registration for a predetermined node, and permits the registered user to set registered user operation authority for other registered user within a limit of the registered user operation authority of the registered user,

the processor configured to set for each general node, non- registered user operation authority that is operation authority of a non-registered user that is not registered by the user registration means, and storing the non-registered user operation authority in the database by associating the non-registered user operation authority with the general node, and

the processor configured to, when execution of the process corresponding to the function node is requested by the non-registered user, causing the function node to execute the process only when the process is permitted by the non-registered user operation authority set for the general node that is the parent node of the function node.”;

“Claim 19. (Canceled).”

***Reasons for Allowance***

4. Claims 1, 3-9 and 11-17 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Prior Art Ohsaki teaches in the same field of the invention, a method for simply defining a complicated workflow, for example, a workflow such as a circulation among a plurality of departments where the circulation route varies in each department, and a storage medium; (see Ohsaki, [Abstract]). However, Ohsaki does not explicitly disclose the function node to execute the process only when the process is permitted by the registered user operation authority. Whereas the claimed invention is claimed for "execute the process only when the process is permitted by the registered user operation authority... set in the general node that is a parent node of the function node" as shown in the independent claims 1, 9 and 17.

5. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Truong V. Vo whose telephone number is (571) 272-1796. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Thr. 7:30a.m.-5p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vital Pierre can be reached on (571) 272-4215. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

June 2, 2009

Truong Van Vo

/Truong V Vo/  
Examiner, Art Unit 2156

/Pierre M. Vital/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2156